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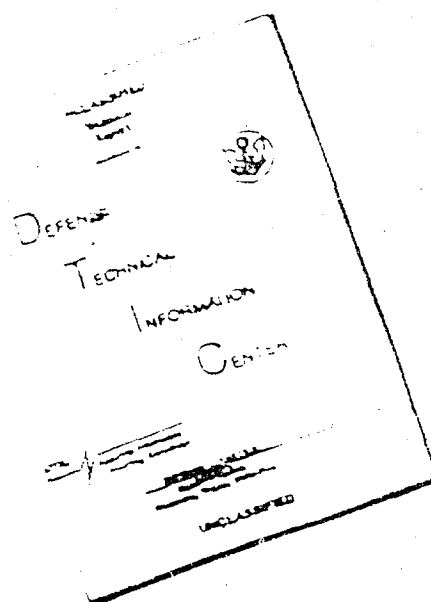
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→ This study attempts to determine if there is a need for a school to specifically train Latin American military personnel in selected tactical and technical areas. It also examines the options of an institution that would meet specific Latin American training requirements as well as military and political objectives of the United States.

Research revealed that American military influence in Latin America is rapidly decreasing and that Latin America is capable of conducting military training in support of its own needs. The primary advantage of operating the United States Army School of the Americas would be the access to Latin American military personnel and the resulting degree of influence. The United States must evaluate its policies and objectives in Latin America and decide if it is willing to fund such an institution.

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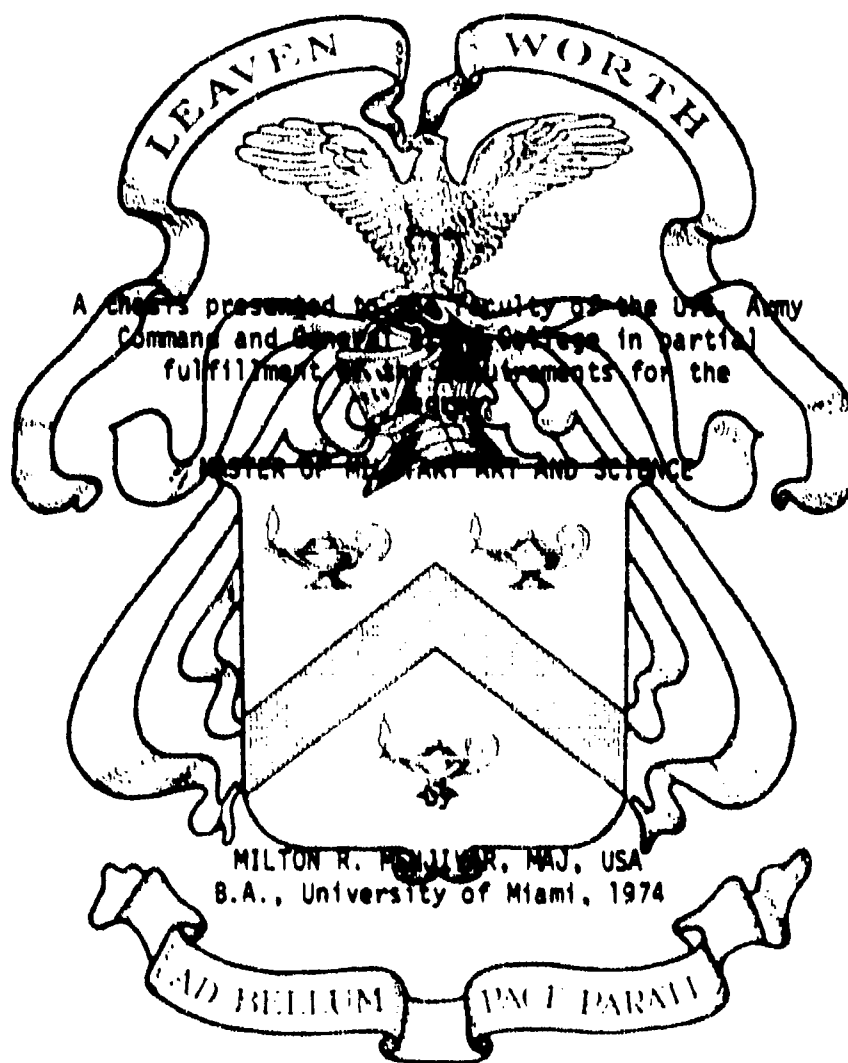
Milton R. Menjivar, MAJ, USA
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027

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Name of candidate Milton R. Menjivar, MAJ, USA

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Approved by:

[Signature], Research Advisor

[Signature], Member, Graduate Faculty

[Signature], Member, Consulting Faculty

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ABSTRACT

THE U.S. ARMY SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS AND ITS IMPACT ON UNITED STATES-LATIN AMERICA MILITARY RELATIONS, by Major Milton R. Menjivar, USA, 63 pages.

This study attempts to determine if there is a need for a school to specifically train Latin American military personnel in selected tactical and technical areas. It also examines the options of an institution that would meet specific Latin American training requirements as well as military and political objectives of the United States.

Research revealed that American military influence in Latin America is rapidly decreasing and that Latin America is capable of conducting military training in support of its own needs. The primary advantage of operating the United States Army School of the Americas would be the access to Latin American military personnel and the resulting degree of influence. The United States must evaluate its policies and objectives in Latin America and decide if it is willing to fund such an institution.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The recent signing and ratification of the new Panama Canal Treaty between the Governments of the United States of America and the Republic of Panama mark a new era in relations between the United States and Latin America. As part of the agreements, the United States will return to Panamanian control the territory known as the Panama Canal Zone. For decades the United States has operated military schools in the Canal Zone for the stated purpose of training Latin American military personnel. The principal schools supporting this effort are the U.S. Army School of the Americas (USARSA), the Inter-American Air Force Academy, and the Navy Small Craft Instruction and Technical Team.

This study examines the highlights of military relations between the United States and Latin America from a historical perspective and attempts to determine the validity of a continuation of USARSA in view of current developments.

During the mid-1970s a series of economic and political factors contributed to a decrease in student enrollment at USARSA. This decrease has been part of an overall reduction in the professional ties between the military in Latin America and their counterparts in the

United States. The signing of the Panama Canal Treaty has made the future of USARSA an issue that must be considered as part of the overall agreements. Among the factors that caused the decrease in student enrollment were a funding reduction and the consequent curriculum changes, but the most dramatic was the 1977 rejection of elements of future United States military assistance by Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Uruguay. Their rejection of military aid was a reaction to United States criticism of their internal human rights policies. To this, one must add the exclusion in 1979 of Nicaragua and Paraguay. The events mentioned had an impact not only in the countries involved but also in the hemisphere's remaining nations with military governments or governments that were strongly influenced by military leaders. The once-cordial military relations between the United States and Latin America have reverted to a passive and cautious state.

Recent USARSA efforts to increase the student enrollment have met with some success. Personnel from USARSA visited most of the client countries and conferred with leading military authorities for the purpose of soliciting students and finding out what the countries needed from USARSA. These efforts were successful in obtaining promises of cooperation and, in some cases, additional students. Despite this limited success, however, the low student enrollment could make the funding requirements prohibitive.

The Problem

A document related to the Panama Canal Treaty, the Agreement on Certain Activities of the United States of America in the Republic of Panama, states:

[T]he authority of the United States to conduct schooling of Latin American military personnel in the United States Army School of the Americas shall expire five years after the entry into force of the Panama Canal Treaty unless the two Governments otherwise agree.

Continuation or noncontinuation of USARSA will ultimately be a political decision.

Before any agreements can be reached with the Republic of Panama in regard to continuation of the school, however, the United States must take a hard look at the objectives of such an institution. The conditions that existed when the school was created in 1946 have changed considerably, and the declining student population seems to indicate a need to reevaluate the present USARSA and to examine its utility in 1979. Therefore, the problem is to determine if there is a valid need for the U.S. Army School of the Americas.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to determine if there is a need for a school to specifically train Latin American military personnel in selected tactical and technical areas and, second,

¹U.S., Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of Media Services, Documents Associated With the Panama Canal Treaties (Washington: Government Printing Office, September 1977), p. 53.

to examine the options of an institution that would meet specific Latin American training requirements as well as military and political objectives of the United States. The detailed funding requirements of such a program are beyond the scope of this study and are only addressed in a broad manner.

For the purpose of this study, Latin America is considered to be the hemisphere's Spanish-speaking countries plus Brazil. Additionally, when use is made of the terms American and Americans, the intent is to describe United States citizens. The two terms are not used in the hemispheric sense.

Questions To Be Answered

The research reported in this thesis was conducted to answer the following questions:

- Do current United States interests in Latin America support continuation of USARSA?
- Is there a need for a school to specifically train Latin American military personnel?
- Do Latin America interests support continuation of USARSA?
- What would the consequences be if USARSA is discontinued?
- What are the alternatives to USARSA?

Review of Literature

A review of the literature that specializes in Latin American or military subjects revealed very few references to the topic of

discussion. Among the literature examined were:

-- Current History, a monthly publication that devotes periodic issues to Latin America. It has addressed some of the effects of military relations in the area, but it has not detailed any of the questions addressed in this paper.

-- Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, which emphasizes coverage of interrelations between Latin American nations and the rest of the world. Military topics are only occasionally addressed.

-- Latin America Political Report, a timely and informative publication that often carries articles concerning military relations between the United States and Latin America. While it only addresses USARSA as a secondary issue, it has emphasized the importance of USARSA to a limited number of Latin American officers.

-- Military Review, a publication of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College that would be one of the most likely periodicals to address the topic under consideration, especially in its Spanish edition. However, only general information articles about USARSA have been published.

-- Parameters, the journal of the U.S. Army War College, which periodically addresses the topic of inter-American security relations. The Fall 1978 issue includes on pages 10-16 an article by Colonel Norman M. Smith, "Our Changing Role in Panama: An Overview," which discusses changes that will take place in the Canal Zone due to the new treaties. Among the changes mentioned is the possibility that a new

agreement may be reached on the utility of continued operation of USARSA.

In the Spring 1977 issue of Parameters, pages 46-56, "Inter-American Security Relations: The Future of US Military Diplomacy in the Hemisphere," by Dr. Caesar D. Sereseres, recommends on page 46 that the United States "curtail combat type training (most Latin American military institutions have this capability) . . . [and] concentrate on officer exchange programs at the War College and Command and General staff levels" as a means of revitalizing military diplomacy.

Related studies by Army War College students are listed in the bibliography, but the general lack of information about USARSA appears to leave room for ignorance and misinterpretation of what it really is. The perceived gap of information about this topic has motivated me to write this paper. Having worked at USARSA for nearly five years, having visited ten Latin American countries, and having talked at length with soldiers from every Latin American army, I have been able to see the Latin American military men from a different view than that normally seen by a U.S. Army officer. This paper should contribute to a better understanding of USARSA and may shed some light about its future.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Pre-World War II

When addressing United States-Latin American relations and military by-products, an examination of their origins and history becomes necessary. The concept of Pan-Americanism was born with the newly formed Latin American nations. After the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808, the Spanish colonies increased their struggle for independence. These efforts resulted in the establishment of independent nations in Latin America between the years 1811 and 1823. Simón Bolívar of Venezuela was among the most prominent figures in the struggles for independence.

Bolívar has often been called the "George Washington of South America." While Washington was successful in maintaining unity among the Thirteen Colonies, Bolívar's attempts were not as fruitful even though common origins, language, religion, and aspirations contributed to the forming of a loosely knit relation between the Latin American nations. Although most Latin Americans shared the desire to maintain Pan-American ties, it was not until 1826, when Bolívar inspired the Congress of Panama, that deliberate efforts were made to establish a formal union. United States representatives who were invited to these

meetings failed to arrive before the Congress adjourned.¹

Numerous other efforts toward Pan-Americanism by prominent Latin Americans resulted in only limited success, and the concept developed more as an idea than a fact. The United States remained a passive observer during these events but was greatly admired by Latin Americans for its high principles of liberty and independence. The United States policy as outlined by the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 was not seen by Latin Americans as a threat and was indeed a comforting idea that European powers would be prevented from recuperating their former colonies.

Prior to the 20th century the United States interests and policies toward Latin America were tempered by a group of strategists led by Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan that viewed the area in the immediate geographical vicinity of the United States as an American private lake. This "lake" included the Caribbean, the northern part of South America's coast, and the Gulf republics in Central America. Economic ventures in these areas by American financiers and adventurers who sought to develop agricultural plantations in the area reinforced the views of the Mahan group. The California gold rush of 1849 once again focused American interest in the areas of Central America as a search for a less hazardous passage to western territories became a prime concern. American interests in the area resulted in the building of the Panama Canal and the creation of the Panama Canal Zone.

¹Federico G. Gil, Latin American-United States Relations (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), p. 146.

Before the Spanish-American War in 1898 the United States had been involved militarily in several Latin American countries, usually in unilateral actions that were designed to protect American citizens and their economic interests. Threats to the continent and the Pan-American alliance were nonexistent; therefore, the United States relied initially on the British and later on its own naval fleet for protection against potential adversaries. The Spanish-American War gave the United States its first taste of world power, and the new Navy was able to show the American colors in far and remote places.

During World War I American involvement in what was basically a European war was once more in a remote area that presented only limited threats to the Western Hemisphere. No special efforts were made to protect the sources of raw materials that existed in Latin America, and no multilateral treaties of any significance were signed with Latin American nations. This period was followed by a series of military interventions in the Caribbean area. Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Panama were subjects of these interventions and at one time or another became virtual protectorates under United States military rule.² With the new threat of a rearmed Germany and the flexing of the Japanese naval muscles in the Pacific in the 1930s, however, the United States perceived a threat to its sea lanes and the

²Gil, p. 89.

Panama Canal.³ These new developments triggered what was to become the basis for the concept of hemispheric defense.

World War II

Prior to the United States entering World War II, American diplomats and military men cultivated selected Latin American governments in the hope of extending the lines of defense around the nation. This new strategic perimeter was to include an area extending from Newfoundland to Brazil, the Galápagos Islands, and north to Alaska.⁴ Through a series of bilateral agreements, the United States secured base rights in Ecuador and in the Natal area of Brazil. The Brazilian bases proved to be particularly important in later years, when military supplies were ferried over the Atlantic to North African battlefields. This period witnessed once again what was to become the pattern for United States-Latin American military relations. The United States, perceiving a threat to its interests, enlisted the help of Latin American countries in achieving its defense objectives.

After Pearl Harbor, the involvement on Latin America's part became more pronounced. Although several nations were sympathetic toward the Axis Powers, all except Argentina declared war against them.⁵

³John Child, "The Inter-American Military System: Historical Development, Current Trends and Implications for U.S. Policy" (Military issue research memorandum, U.S. Army War College, 23 October 1977), p. 7 (DDC Doc AD A047591).

⁴Child, p. 6.

⁵Gil, p. 190.

Brazil and Mexico contributed combat forces that fought alongside Americans in Europe and the Pacific, respectively. A system of coastal watch posts was developed throughout the hemisphere, and, at a minimum, Latin America contributed to the war effort with raw materials in support of the war effort and a much needed addition to the labor force.

The institutions on which the power of the Spanish Crown was based--the military, the landed gentry, and the Church--were all represented during the colonization of Latin America. The preponderance of militarism and respect and admiration for military might are reflections of it. Prior to World War II the Prussian military traditions were to Latin America the greatest representation of militarism. When the United States emerged from the war as a victor, nothing could eclipse its prestige. Here was a noble and humane nation, rich and prosperous, that could also fight. Latin American military leaders were eager to associate themselves with the Americans, and the next step was up to the United States.

Post-World War II

While the United States concentrated its efforts on readjusting to the postwar period and the establishment of the United Nations, its diplomats were not neglecting Latin America. Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, a Latin American specialist and former ambassador, was one of the most vocal advocates of the inter-American system. He believed it "should be the cornerstone of the world structure of the

future."⁶ Although Welles's views did not prevail, in 1947 a Latin American defense arrangement was formalized in the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (commonly known as the Rio Treaty).

The post-World War II period brought about American confrontation with the Communist nations and the Cold War. As the newly perceived threat was seen in Europe and the far areas of the Pacific, the interest in Latin America diminished. The United States efforts in the area were limited to attempts in developing among the nations a standardization in arms, equipment, training, and doctrine. Some in Latin America viewed these actions as an expedient mean by which the United States could dispose of surplus arms and equipment while preventing competition from European arms merchants. The U.S. Army School of the Americas was established during this period to support some of Latin America's training requirements.

As the influence of communism swept throughout the world, Latin American nations began to feel its effects. Of special interest to communist sympathizers were governments ruled by the military. In 1951 Guatemala elected Jacobo Arbenz to the presidency. He enacted a number of agrarian reforms that directly confronted the United Fruit Company. This led to a rift in relations between the United States and Guatemala and clearly placed the Arbenz leftist government as an antagonist to United States policy. The United States response was to counter with an

⁶Gil, p. 189.

"invasion" by Guatemalan exiles the Central Intelligence Agency had trained and equipped.⁷ Arbenz was deposed and replaced by a military regime. Thus a precedent was set, and the United States continued to support military governments against leftist governments, elected or otherwise.

Among those who opposed military regimes elsewhere was a young Cuban lawyer, Fidel Castro, who opposed the Batista regime in Cuba. Castro's struggle and eventual success had a tremendous impact in Latin America.

Counterinsurgency

While the United States was involved in Korea and Berlin and a new national policy changed the concept of defense from massive retaliation to flexible response, Latin America's communist threat became more imminent. Increased American involvement in Vietnam, however, was first an asset to and later the nemesis of military relations between the United States and Latin America.

The question of whether Fidel Castro was a communist before he deposed Batista or whether he was forced to become one because of United States opposition to his revolutionary goals will continue to be debated. The fact is that Castro became an overnight sensation throughout the world for having defeated a dictatorship. Shortly thereafter he expressed his leftist ideology and his support for insurgency movements

⁷ Gil, p. 212.

in Latin America.

Latin Americans perceived President Kennedy's election as the start of a new era in American foreign policy. When the Soviet Union expressed support for Castro, Kennedy countered by adopting the recommendations of President Juscelino Kubitschek of Brazil and establishing the Alliance for Progress.⁸

The Alliance for Progress was a series of programs geared to alleviate a number of socioeconomic problems endemic to Latin America and thereby reduce the discontent that was the basis for insurgency. Emphasis was also placed on counterinsurgency and civic action programs by the military. During this period the United States increased its commitment in Southeast Asia and began to emphasize counterinsurgency in its own military doctrine.

Initially, Latin America looked upon Fidel Castro's government in Cuba with admiration, but the threat became apparent after Castro's break with the United States and his stated support for insurgency efforts in the continent. The most notorious act was Castro's shipment of arms to Venezuela in an attempt to undermine the elected regime of President Betancourt. Since the most well-known phase of the Cuban Revolution had been the rural guerrillas, the natural result was the propagation of this type of action. The United States contributed to the counterinsurgency efforts with the concept of internal defense and

⁸Gil, p. 238.

development that eventually was widely used in Southeast Asia. The mixture of military actions and nation building efforts in Latin America was relatively successful. The only direct threat to the United States by an outside power was the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, but that was handled without direct involvement by any of the Latin American nations.

The Canal Zone witnessed increased military activity as United States Special Forces assets specifically earmarked for Latin America were stationed there. Also, expansion of the Jungle Operations Training Center to accommodate Vietnam-bound troops eventually spilled over to the training of Latin American personnel. The United States presence in Latin America was at its peak because of increased personnel assignments to Military Groups, Missions, and related activities in the area.

During Batista's rule in Cuba, the nearby nation of the Dominican Republic was dominated by Leonidas Trujillo, another Caribbean dictator. When Trujillo was assassinated in 1961, the United States was determined to preclude another Cuba. When elections held in the Dominican Republic were only followed by coups and counterplays that resulted in civil war in 1965, President Johnson, fearing a Cuba type government, ordered a unilateral United States military intervention. He quickly obtained an endorsement by the Organization of American States, and the addition of soldiers from Brazil, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Paraguay provided a convenient rubber stamp of legitimacy.⁹

⁹ Gil, p. 252.

Under Soviet pressure, Castro decreased his support for Latin American guerrillas, but his follower and guerrilla expert, "Che" Guevara, continued the effort until he was captured and killed in Bolivia in 1967. The intensity of the insurgent rural efforts then decreased considerably. Some Latin American insurgents chose the urban guerrilla route and concentrated their efforts in the larger cities. The wave of incidents that rocked the United States during 1968 and the resulting anti-Vietnam mood in the nation again had repercussions in Latin America.

Post-Vietnam

About the same time the United States was showing withdrawal symptoms from the Vietnam War, a series of events were occurring in Peru that subsequently affected the character of Latin American military thought. The military coup and the resulting Peruvian Revolution of 1968 were the first expressions of a new sense of independent military thinking and nationalism.

A group of Peruvian officers determined to create a national policy that would not be aligned with either the United States or the Soviet Union and would support Peru's needs and aspirations. The new Peruvian regime nationalized some American-owned assets and established a dialog with Cuba. At the war college in Peru, Centro de Altos Estudios Militares (CAEM), a number of ideas surfaced on how to best achieve national goals through an unaligned policy. In fact, CAEM was

the forum that gave birth to the thoughts behind the 1968 revolution.

Although all goals of the Peruvian Revolution were not met, due primarily to economic constraints, the seeds of independent thinking were later reflected in the departure from tradition in the purchase of non-American arms and equipment that was brought about by the United States posture of not selling advanced weapons to Latin America. The United States position was based on the desire to prevent an arms race in an area where there was no real external threat. Peru's response was to purchase the items first from European nations and later from the Soviet Union. This allowed Peru to achieve a diversification of dependency as far as military hardware was concerned.

The political activities and anti-war movements that occurred in the United States from the late 1960s through the mid-1970s were crucial in their effect on military relations between the United States and Latin America. The war protests and the phobia against the military intervention in Southeast Asia eventually forced the Government to withdraw from that part of the world. The Latin American military interpreted the withdrawal as a sign of weakness and defeat. The resulting reduction in United States military numbers affected the personnel who worked in Military Assistance Advisory Groups, Missions, and Military Groups throughout Latin America.

The rejection of military intervention and the liberal sentiment that became fashionable in the United States led to the nation's reassessment of its involvement in Vietnam-type conflicts. These

feelings were reflected in the Congress and resulted in regional funding ceilings, Congressional training limitations, and a general sense of anti-militarism. The Congressional emphasis on human rights was further amplified by President Carter and was made an important factor in United States foreign policy.

Whereas in the past any Latin American government, regardless of its origin, was assured United States support in dealing with internal dissent, new policies censured such actions. One by one the anti-communist military governments were reminded of their human rights violations. Some nations were excluded by Congress from receiving further military aid, and others rejected United States aid unilaterally. The policy of limiting arms sales to Latin America became moot as these countries went to new markets in Western Europe, Israel, and the Soviet Union.

Of all Latin American nations, only Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Venezuela are not ruled directly or indirectly by the military. United States funding for military assistance programs in the region has been reduced to a bare minimum. As discussed in Chapter III, the majority of the Latin American nations have been excluded from or limited in participating at USARSA. This climate and new constraints the Panama Canal treaties impose will be a determining factor in the future of USARSA.

CHAPTER III

USARSA TODAY

Founding of USARSA

The exact circumstances that prompted establishment of the School of the Americas appear as elusive as its future. Up to 1978 the course catalog of the U.S. Army School of the Americas (USARSA) and supporting briefings at the school indicated that initial establishment was based on a requirement to train United States military personnel who were stationed in the Canal Zone. A search of USARSA's inactive files during the spring of 1978 revealed a letter dated June 13, 1966, from U.S. Army Colonel Enrique M. Benitez, the first commandant of the Latin American Training Center, the predecessor of USARSA. The letter, which states that the Center was founded "for the sole purpose of training Latin American students," gives a good perspective of prevailing conditions in Latin American armies at that time.¹ The name of the school was changed in 1949 to U.S. Army Caribbean School and in 1963 to its present name.

¹E. M. Benitez, Colonel USA, Retd., Letter to Major Robert E. Scofield, Inf., Hqrs. USA School of the Americas, Fort Gulick, Canal Zone, June 13, 1966 (see appendix). As a result of finding Colonel Benitez's letter, references to the school's history as published in the 1979 USARSA course catalog have been amended.

Mission

The mission statement of the U.S. Army School of the Americas is described as follows:

To conduct military training of selected Latin American personnel to achieve higher levels of military professionalism.

To improve the effectiveness of military education and training in Latin America; and to foster greater cooperation among the Latin American military forces in the conduct of military education and training.²

What is not stated in the preceding excerpt is the importance of maintaining contact and access to the Latin American military and the influence that results from these contacts. The present and past commandants have made several attempts to redefine USARSA's mission, but the results have always avoided any references to political objectives. As a whole, USARSA's mission is training, but the implied political effects of exposing Latin American military personnel to United States doctrine and institutions are immeasurable.

Organization and Curriculum

The internal organization of USARSA has changed continuously in order to meet demands and circumstances. During the late 1960s, at the peak of its contribution to Latin American counterinsurgency efforts, the instructional departments were designed to address technical and tactical subjects. The Technical Department addressed areas that related to the operation and maintenance of equipment and the training

²USARSA, "Visitor Briefing," March 1978.

of combat service support personnel. The main effort, however, was concentrated in the Department of Internal Security, which addressed courses that were aimed directly at confronting an insurgent. Among the most productive courses during that period was one that taught counter-insurgency operations to company grade officers. Known as the Tigre Course, it presented a mixture of instruction that was extracted from the Ranger Course and the Special Forces Officer Course. To this day the graduates of that course wear their distinctive badge with extreme pride.

By the early 1970s the school had realigned its departments to reflect its deemphasis on counterinsurgency military operations. That organization divided the academic departments and concentration as follows:

- Department of Command and Staff, principally oriented toward field grade officer training, with its main efforts toward teaching command and general staff procedures.
- Department of Combat Operations, which concentrated on instruction derived from the Infantry School and combat arms.
- Department of Technical Operations, with three committees to handle maintenance, communications, and engineer instruction.
- Department of Support Operations, with three committees that taught medical, military intelligence, and supply subjects.

The early-1970 organization continued with minor modifications until 1975. Due to budget constraints, low student enrollment, and

Congressional limitations, plus a realistic assessment of the quality of instruction presented, the Departments of Technical and Support Operations were deactivated between 1975 and 1977.

The present organization of USARSA's instructional departments is described in its 1979 course catalog as follows:

The Department of Command and Staff all high echelon resource management and division and brigade level tactical and staff subjects. Organized into 3 Instructor Groups, the Department has proponency for 7 separate programs of instruction, the longest of which is the 42-week Command and General Staff Officer Course.

.....
All tactical field exercises and weapons training are centralized in the Department of Combat Operations, the largest and most active of the School's two academic components. The Department's 3 Instructor Groups present a total of 10 separate programs of instruction to officers, enlisted men and cadets which cover a broad spectrum of combat and combat-related subjects.³

The school's organization also has its corresponding complement of supporting staff and administrative elements. It does, however, rely on support from Southern Command elements in the Canal Zone for training, logistic, and administrative requirements that are beyond its organic means.

The curriculum of USARSA includes instruction presented to officers, noncommissioned officers, and cadets as well as mixed courses that are open to both officers and enlisted men. Almost in its entirety the base of the course structure comes from the version of courses offered in Continental United States installations by the U.S. Army

³USARSA, Course Catalog, 1979, pp. 15 & 17.

Training and Doctrine Command. The USARSA course offerings for calendar year 1979 are shown in Table 1. Additionally, USARSA has the capacity to structure courses using specific blocks of instruction already in existence or to design new courses from the ground up.

Faculty

The present staff and faculty of USARSA is composed of United States and Latin American military personnel as well as civilian employees. As of June 1978 the table of distribution and allowances that determined the personnel authorization for the school listed 44 U.S. Army officers and 106 enlisted personnel. The number of civilians was 49, with most being translators and clerical employees. The U.S. Air Force traditionally allocates two officers to serve as instructors for a period of two years.

As part of its inter-American flavor, the school has made use of Latin American guest instructors to supplement its faculty. These officers and noncommissioned officers are often drawn from former students who distinguished themselves at USARSA or are allocated by specific countries that use their own selection criteria. The number of Latin American personnel in June 1978 was 23 officers and 12 enlisted men. These figures, as well as those that authorize United States and civilian personnel, are in the process of being revised as a result of a recent manpower survey conducted at USARSA by Department of the Army representatives.

TABLE 1.--USARSA Course Offerings, 1979

Course	Student Capacity	No. of Weeks
<u>Officers</u>		
Battle Simulations	25	4
Combat Arms Basic	60	18
Combat Arms Officer Advanced	40	24
Command and General Staff Officers	40	42
Command and General Staff Officers Preparatory	40	2
Infantry Tactics and Techniques	40	10
Joint Operations	25	4
Resource Management	25	8
Small Unit Training Management	40	4
Training Management	25	4
<u>Cadets</u>		
Basic Officer Orientation	200	5
Cadet Combat Arms Basic	200	6
Infantry Officer Qualification	60	23
Small Unit Infantry Tactics and Branch Orientation	200	6
<u>Noncommissioned Officers</u>		
Noncommissioned Officer Leadership	60	13
<u>Officers and Noncommissioned Officers</u>		
Commando Operations	40	6
Patrolling Operations	100	4
Total:	1,220	

COMPILED FROM: U.S. Army School of the Americas, Course Catalog, 1979 (Fort Gulick, Canal Zone, 1 June 1978).

An important event was the addition of a Latin American assistant commandant in January 1977. The position is to be occupied for a period of one year and rotated among the participating countries. The officers appointed thus far have been highly competent and have assumed important positions on returning to their countries. Brigadier General Manuel Guerrero Paz served as assistant commandant during 1977. He is presently the Deputy Chief of Staff, Colombian Army. The assistant commandant in 1978 was Colonel Wilfredo Mori Orzo. He now serves as a military aide to the President of Peru. The current assistant commandant, Colonel Jorge E. Asanza, is expected to be assigned to a comparable position upon his return to Ecuador.

The normal tour of duty of U.S. Army personnel is two to three years, depending on marital status, and the period is usually split between staff and faculty positions. Noncommissioned officers, because of military occupational specialty restrictions, usually serve their entire tour in one position. The length of tour of the Latin American guest instructors varies between 12 and 24 months, depending on the country involved. Latin Americans generally view service at USARSA favorably because of the relative prestige of serving abroad and the increased monetary remuneration they receive. Guest instructors at USARSA receive the regular pay from their respective countries plus a travel and living allowance from the U.S. Army. The allowance is either \$10 or \$25 per day depending on place of residence, that is, in government quarters \$10 daily and in privately owned rental housing \$25 daily.

Privileges are extended to them that authorize the use of military facilities such as exchanges, commissaries, and the like. While not officially condoned, Latin Americans at USARSA have access to Panama's duty free shopping and thereby enjoy a clear financial advantage when compared to what is available to them in their own countries.

Students

The number of attending students has fluctuated considerably during the last ten years. As a general rule the number attending from a particular country in a given year will vary depending on that country's relations with the United States or its internal security needs. Initially, USARSA could count on all of Latin America for students. As the political climates developed, however, one by one the countries have been either excluded from or limited in participation. Student enrollment during the period 1973-1979 is shown in Table 2.

The countries excluded from or limited in attending USARSA are shown in Table 3. The limitations applied to Brazil and Venezuela restrict them to professional development courses, but that term has not been properly defined. The recent exclusion of Nicaragua and Paraguay from participation in USARSA should further reduce the student enrollment.

TABLE 2.--USARSA Student Enrollment, 1973-1979

Country	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979*
Argentina	17	11	8	7	4	0	0
Bolivia	134	120	131	90	104	162	182
Brazil	1	1	4	3	0	0	0
Colombia	24	27	97	508	160	103	185
Chile	164	479	350	0	0	0	0
Dominican Republic	90	101	71	83	31	37	47
Ecuador	0	0	91	42	21	139	52
El Salvador	64	102	99	52	27	0	0
Guatemala	60	67	44	11	24	0	0
Honduras	91	141	79	67	31	70	25
Mexico	0	4	10	15	0	4	24
Nicaragua	37	59	103	96	75	213	0
Panama	119	116	308	281	98	37	56
Paraguay	13	21	26	90	14	33	0
Peru	164	251	203	306	308	18	37
Uruguay	65	73	66	106	0	0	0
Venezuela	74	60	42	20	4	31	1
Total	1,117	1,633	1,732	1,777	901	847	609

*Statistics for 1979 are projections.

SOURCE: U.S. Army School of the Americas, 1979.

TABLE 3.--Nonparticipating Countries

Country	Year	Reason
Argentina	1978	Human rights issue
Brazil	1978	Human rights and nuclear energy issues
Chile	1975	Human rights issue
Costa Rica	1966	Congressional exclusion (no army)
Cuba	1960	Diplomatic relations severed
El Salvador	1978	Human rights issue
Guatemala	1978	Human rights issue
Haiti	1978	Limited to air/sea rescue courses
Nicaragua	1979	Human rights issue
Paraguay	1979	Human rights issue
Uruguay	1976	Human rights issue
Venezuela	1978	Limited to professional development courses

SOURCE: U.S. Army School of the Americas, 1979.

CHAPTER IV

USARSA'S ROLE IN THE 1980S

United States Interests

The U.S. Army School of the Americas (USARSA) was established as a means of supporting United States interests in Latin America and, from its beginning, was an instrument of the Security Assistance Program. The circumstances that shaped United States policy in the post-World War II period have changed considerably, as have the nation's security interests. What are the United States military interests in Latin America now? Air Force General David C. Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has defined them in the following manner: "Broad US interests in Latin America include stability over the long term, regional security which contributes to and benefits from stability, and political and economic cooperation."¹

At the present time the only issues that would upset Latin American stability and threaten regional security appear to be, internal strife in specific countries and the ever-present Communist Cuba. For now the Cubans are heavily involved in Africa and do not present an

¹U.S., Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, United States Military Posture: (A Supplement to) the Chairman's Overview for FY 1980 (Washington: Government Printing Office, n.d.), p. 16.

overt threat in Latin America. Internal problems with a destabilizing potential are present in numerous nations. The response to these threats by countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Uruguay has resulted in the systematic violation of their citizens' human rights.

United States influence in Latin America is in a period of decline. Only 3 percent of all United States weapons sales is to these nations, and the number of security assistance personnel has dropped from a high of 769 in 1968 to fewer than 100 in 1979.² This year only Panama will have a security assistance group of more than six military personnel.

How does the Security Assistance Program, as implemented through USARSA, support United States interests? Latin American students in attendance there are funded by either the Foreign Military Sales program or the International Military Education and Training program. In the Foreign Military Sales program, the user nation pays cash for the training or receives credit from the United States. The International Military Education and Training program provides grants from funds Congress appropriates. Most USARSA client countries depend on the grant from the International Military Education and Training program to fund their attendance. Although the Executive Branch recognizes that the

²U.S., Department of Defense, Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1980
By Harold Brown, Secretary of Defense (Washington: Government Printing
Office, 25 January 1979), p. 58.

training of military personnel is one of the most effective means of influencing recipient countries, Congress excludes nations or makes budget cuts based on human rights or other issues.

The influence USARSA exerts on its graduates cannot be quantified. If one assumes that students sent to USARSA were selected because of their prior achievements and potential, one must then conclude that they are "good" not because they attended the school, but that they attended the school because they are "good."

A number of USARSA graduates occupy positions of responsibility within their governments. If we accept that influence is the potential to effect change or modify the actions of others, we should conclude that it is in the best interest of the United States to maintain means of interacting with those potential leaders. This influence may not always be good or effective, but it is something we must continue to have.

The reduction in military personnel assigned to Latin America, plus the reduction in funding, has resulted in decreased influence in the area. The once-prevalent theory that exposure to "America's system" might result in favorable changes in the area of human rights is no longer prevalent, and the policy of exclusion may alienate Latin American countries.

The USARSA has been a major actor in United States-Latin America military relations. The assumption that a student becomes psychologically indebted to the teacher created a favorable area that "influenced"

the graduates.³ The axiom that access equates influence is valid in this case. If one assumes that by accepting funds from the International Military Education and Training program the receiving nation also accepts a factor of influence in either real or psychological terms, it appears that those countries with the greatest need for grant aid, that is, countries with the weakest economies, have to accept greater influence.⁴ This has generally been the case in nations such as Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, and Central American nations. An exception to this rule occurred when pressures from human rights advocates became so intense that even the less wealthy nations of El Salvador and Guatemala chose to reject the training funds if accepting them meant "interference" in their internal affairs. Taken together, the reduction in United States military personnel, the fund cuts, and Congressional exclusions have created a considerable decrease in United States-Latin American military relations.

Latin American Perceptions

Just as each Latin American nation is different from the others, each has its own interests and perceptions of USARSA. What are the training needs of the Latin American military, and does USARSA satisfy those needs? In an attempt to answer these two questions and to

³U.S., Department of State, International Military Education and Training (IMET): Some Options for Latin America (Washington, n.d.), p. 5.

⁴Ibid., p. 11.

evaluate the school's effectiveness, USARSA conducted a series of visits to several Latin American countries during 1978. The countries visited were Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela.

Additionally, a questionnaire under the signature of Lieutenant General D. P. McAuliffe was sent to the Military Group Commander in each of the countries visited as well as to Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Paraguay. Copies of the questionnaire were also provided to several Latin American Military Attachés who were accredited in the Republic of Panama. Generally, USARSA teams had an opportunity to brief Military Group personnel and also the prominent members of local military establishments. Military Groups completed the questionnaire in coordination with input by the appropriate country team member. Although each response and after action report reflected its own views and interests, some general trends were apparent.

All countries indicated their concern with the reduction in International Military Education and Training funds. If grant aid is discontinued or reduced, the number of students will decrease commensurately, because few countries are willing to contribute their own funds. Guatemala indicated it would pay for any type of training it needed. One may speculate that the training would be of a technical nature since Guatemala is already purchasing a number of spaces at the Inter-American Air Force Academy through the Foreign Military Sales program. Interestingly, Venezuela, which is thought to have ample funds because of its

oil revenues, expressed concern over the high cost of USARSA courses and indicated that its training funds will be limited due to anticipated internal budget cuts.

On the question regarding the quality and effectiveness of the training offered at USARSA, some respondents were less candid than others. While students and Latin American instructors at USARSA are aware of the school's shortcomings, they often refrain from mentioning them in the presence of United States officers. Only after certain personal relations have been established, especially with the help of a cocktail or two, do these kinds of criticisms come out. Following these trends, the responses during the team's visit were that all was well at USARSA. Only Argentina and the Military Attaché from Ecuador provided negative responses. Argentina stated that the quality of instruction at USARSA was not up to its standards, while the Ecuadorean stated flatly:

The largest problem USARSA had was the quality of the instruction offered and that a way to improve this would be to select better instructors and provide training aids and equipment of the same quality as that used in CONUS [Continental United States] service schools.⁵

The question of the quality of personnel assigned to Latin America (and USARSA by proximity) has been addressed before. Lieutenant General Gordon Sumner, Jr., USAF, recently retired chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board, addressed this issue and concluded that Latin American duty inhibits officer careers, thus preventing quality

⁵ Cristobal A. Navas A., Colonel, Ecuadorean Army, Military Attaché to the Republic of Panama, Questionnaire response, 25 May 1978.

officers from actively seeking assignments in the area.⁶

Within the Canal Zone, I witnessed the routine transfer to USARSA of officers who had been relieved of their duties elsewhere, while good officers at the school were reassigned to the 193d Infantry Brigade (CZ). This indicates that even the local command does not believe USARSA is important enough to merit the assignment of its best officers. The bilingual requirement for United States instructors in USARSA often excludes officers who are otherwise qualified, but it also permits the assignment of officers whose only qualification is their bilingual ability.

On the question of the impact USARSA's closure would have in Latin America, reports indicate that all countries have the ability to train their enlisted and junior officers. Panama is the only country in Latin America that does not have a military academy, but planning is underway to establish one within the next five years. Honduras has indicated that it has a shortfall in branch qualifying its newly commissioned officers and would welcome funds from the International Military Education and Training program for this purpose, but will train them wherever it may be necessary.⁷

In the area of command and general staff level courses, only the

⁶Gordon Sumner, Jr., "Latin America Duty Inhibits Officer Careers," Army Times, 11 September 1978, p. 19.

⁷USARSA, "After Action Report: Visit to Honduras" (Fort Gulick, Canal Zone, 7 March 1978).

Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama do not operate their own schools. Honduras and the Dominican Republic are planning to start theirs in 1980 and 1981, respectively. The Command and General Staff Course taught at USARSA is patterned after the one offered at Fort Leavenworth, but the course curriculum is outdated even when compared to the nonresident version. The U.S. Army normally programs three students to attend each year, and those selected usually are Foreign Area Officers. The question of the validity of portraying that course as one that is equal to the one at Fort Leavenworth is often questioned. The resources to present the course as offered at Fort Leavenworth are not available, and some American students believe they are being short-changed. Some Latin American students question the validity of studying the employment of tactics the North Atlantic Treaty Organization would use against the Warsaw Pact nations when their total armed forces might not be larger than a brigade and their perceived threat is quite different. Conceivably, those in positions of authority will withdraw USARSA's "equal" status to the Fort Leavenworth school once they realize the disparity in the instruction being presented. Countries that offer command and general staff level instruction send their students to USARSA only after they have completed the resident courses at home. So, in fact, the only students who attend USARSA to learn a "new" subject are those from the countries that do not have a command and general staff college and American officers.

The principal achievement of USARSA courses is that they provide

a vehicle by which Latin Americans learn about each other, observe United States military life in the Canal Zone, and are exposed to limited U.S. Army training doctrine. If given a choice, most countries would prefer the training in the Continental United States instead of the training at USARSA. The key point is that USARSA does not require its students to speak English, but service schools in the United States do.

Bolivian officers expressed concern that a great majority of their majors and lieutenant colonels have never been exposed to a true "American experience," as opposed to the current leaders who, in their majority, have attended military training throughout the USA.⁸

Considering that a large number of Bolivian cadets attend USARSA every year, one can only conclude that they do not consider their training there a true "American experience."

One last point on the quality of the instruction presented at USARSA concerns the height of the counterinsurgency effort in the 1960s. The United States was training large numbers of Latin Americans. Undoubtedly some of the officers turned against their governments and joined the insurgents. Two such officers from the Guatemalan Army made public comments regarding their United States training. Lieutenant Turcios Lima, who trained at Fort Benning, stated: "From the military point of view it [the training] was very good," while Lieutenant Yon Sosa, who trained at Fort Gulick, stated that he learned little

⁸USARSA, "After Action Report: Visit to Bolivia" (Fort Gulick, Canal Zone, 7 March 1978).

"because the courses were poor."⁹

When questioned about their feelings on internationalizing USARSA and either relocating it in the Continental United States or placing it under an inter-American body such as the Inter-American Defense Board, the answers were predictable. Large South American nations which held a prominent position on the Board favored that type of control. The nations that did not have such influence were not in favor of the board type body. In any case, it was clear that the United States must continue to bear most of the funding.

The Future

Under the present circumstances, what would the role of USARSA be in the 1980s? The school could continue to provide training to less than one-half of the Latin American countries while excluding some of the most prominent--Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. This training would undoubtedly provide some influence in the countries which participated. The number of participants, however, would probably continue to decline as the budget gets smaller and grant programs are reduced. Under these circumstances USARSA may well go stale and die a slow and gradual death.

On the other hand, the issue that must be addressed is how USARSA will operate in view of the 5-year limitation the Panama Canal treaties have placed on it. The time is rapidly approaching when the

⁹Richard Gott, Guerrilla Movements in Latin America (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972), pp. 49-50.

United States must decide what it wants to do in Latin America. Does it want to be influential in the military? Does it want to offer a quality product at USARSA? Is Congress willing to fund this effort? Or, will Congress continue its present policy? Personnel concerned with USARSA's future have been considering a number of options.

Options for Operating USARSA

Continue Present Operation

The United States and Panama may decide that USARSA will continue to operate very much in the way it is now operating. The problems of low enrollment, high costs, and limited country participation would prevail, and influence would perhaps be further limited as reductions in those areas continued.

Reorganize

Another option is to continue operating USARSA at its present location but to reorganize it by deleting technical and tactical courses that host countries can conduct. The exception would be the command and general staff level course and those which address training management. Recent innovations by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) have demonstrated that training is the one area in which the United States is clearly ahead of the world. Most of the effort would be concentrated in translating TRADOC materials and adapting them to Latin American needs, thus enabling Latin Americans to train themselves.

The influence would still be there, but the United States would only have direct access to students attending USARSA. Costs associated with ammunition, fuel, and aircraft would be eliminated because courses that require that support would no longer be taught.

Relocate

Relocating USARSA to the Continental United States or to Puerto Rico is another consideration. This option, however, would not have a determining impact on the school's future unless Panama demanded that the school must be removed from its territory. The only possible advantage is that the students would be exposed to a United States environment while off duty.

Internationalize

The internationalization of USARSA under the sponsorship of the Inter-American Defense Board or the Conference of American Armies has been considered. This proposition involves several problems. The school would cease to be a U.S. Army institution and there would be a proportionate loss of influence. Circumstances under which the Inter-American Defense College (IADC) operates are quite different from those under which USARSA operates. In the first place, the topics covered are on a strategic and international level and are not restricted to a specific doctrine, as in the case of tactical courses. The United States "controls" the IADC and funds 66 percent of its budget of \$1.2 million. Latin Americans hold key positions on the staff and

faculty, and a tremendous amount of interchange translates into influence. The Inter-American Defense Board would have to agree to sponsorship of USARSA, but obtaining additional funding would be difficult in view of the United States desire that its portion of that budget not exceed 49 percent.

Combine USARSA with IAAFA

The Inter-American Air Force Academy (IAAFA) at Albrook Air Force Station does not appear to be considered for discussion under the Panama Canal treaties. A possible option would be to relocate USARSA to Albrook Air Force Station and combine the two schools. This could perhaps be more easily accomplished if only the command and general staff level courses and training management courses were retained as USARSA curriculum. The continuation of tactical type instruction would place USARSA in direct competition with elements of the 193d Infantry Brigade (CZ) for precious training areas. The advantages and disadvantages of this option are similar to those for reorganizing.

Close USARSA

The final option is the closing of USARSA. Closure would limit the U.S. Army influence to students who attended courses in the United States, and an increase in spaces at the Command and General Staff College, the War College, and similar institutions could be made. Additional training to meet the requirement that students be fluent in English might well offset any budget savings. Influence under this

option would focus on middle and upper level officers who had already become established in their armies. An additional effort through Military Groups would be necessary to insure that TRADOC materials and training management resources continued to be available to their host countries.

Variations of the options discussed can be made to accommodate any number of variables, but the primary issues are funding and jurisdiction. The key points are that funds to operate an institution such as USARSA must come from the United States and that Panama must have a voice in any decision to continue USARSA in its territory. General Omar Torrijos, Commander, Panama National Guard, has expressed in private his willingness to discuss USARSA's future. When President Aristides Royo visited USARSA in March 1979, he stated: "We believe in the presence of the School of the Americas"; however, he suggested that the school should adopt new objectives "in benefit of the Latin American countries. Of course, including the United States."¹⁰ What those new objectives are and how the United States will perceive them may well determine USARSA of the 1980s.

¹⁰ Army Times, 19 March 1979, p. 12.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

One very clear fact throughout Latin America is that American military influence is rapidly decreasing. Political realities show that the military leaders are an active part of all Latin American governments and have absolute monopoly in several. The reduction of personnel assigned to Military Groups and Missions, decrease in arms sales, and cuts in funds allocated to regional programs have widened the gap between the United States and the Latin American military institutions. In an effort to deter a continental arms race in Latin America, the United States has chosen to restrict the sale of modern weaponry to those countries. Other nations, including the Soviet Union, have met Latin American requirements and have acquired some influence in the area.

The United States has rightly concluded that at this time no real extra-continental threats to Latin America pose a menace to United States national interests. Latin America, however, is very much concerned with the scenario that might result when the Cuban troops now engaged in Africa return home. They might be tempted to engage again in active participation in support of insurgency movements. It might be

natural for Latin America to look to the United States at that time for support, and the United States would no doubt offer it. Yet, the break that is developing between the United States and Latin America is not one that can be quickly mended.

Economic constraints will continue to restrict funds that are allocated to military assistance programs in Latin America. Getting more money from Congress appears to be an almost impossible task. The recently concluded Middle East Treaty between Israel and Egypt, in which the United States will contribute \$5 billion, indicates that Congress is willing to pay the price when national interests are more pressing.

The School of the Americas in itself is not essential to hemispheric defense. Pan-American solidarity can exist without it through numerous economic, social, and political ties, but the influence, good will, and understanding that develop through the sharing of common military tasks, under the tutelage of the United States Army, can be found only at the U.S. Army School of the Americas (USARSA).

Latin America has the ability to provide the training required to maintain its own forces. That training may be good or bad when compared to United States standards, but it is limited by Latin American economic resources. Latin American equipment might be modern and sophisticated or old and obsolete, but it serves perceived needs. Latin America wants United States military training. It wants to share United States experiences, doctrines, and techniques, but it cannot afford to pay the high cost of that training. The only articles it will purchase

through Foreign Military Sales are those deemed essential for the maintenance and operation of new or existing equipment.

Due to the different political roles played by the military in Latin America and the United States, the advantage of influence over Latin Americans is not reciprocal. In this sense the only nation that would have a clear political advantage by operation of USARSA would be the United States. The need for USARSA comes not from its utility as a training institution but for its political power. As stated in Chapter IV, access means influence. The hope is that each student who leaves USARSA has been influenced in a positive manner. This may not be the case if the instruction is poor, if the instructors demonstrate cultural awareness and technical proficiency below the standards of other service schools, or if the facilities at USARSA cause the students unreasonable discomfort.

Political trends in the United States that use the human rights issue as a determining factor for allocating security assistance funds have resulted in polarizing the most influential countries in the hemisphere. Argentina and Brazil are high on that list.

Recommendations

The United States must evaluate its policies and objectives in Latin America. The world oil situation has already caused the United States to take a second look at Mexico because of its potential as a future source of energy. The development of a crisis, however, should

not be the reason for deciding that Latin America deserves more attention. The current policy of disowning dictatorships and attempting to influence them toward democracy is a positive step toward defusing possible communist insurgency, but anti-communist regimes in Latin America should not be completely isolated from military channels to the United States. Communication must remain open and accessible. The USARSA provides a means of achieving that accessibility.

The USARSA, however, must not be an institution nations participate in only when they are under a physical threat or when they need to reward some of their officers with an extended vacation. It must provide quality instruction of the best possible kind. If the training is for cadets, it must be of the same quality and substance as that the U.S. Army provides for its own cadets. The same should be true of branch and tactical training. The Command and General Staff College for Latin America must be on a par with the institution at Fort Leavenworth since it is apparent that the principal reason for attending is to examine the United States systems and techniques. The physical facilities must be equal to the ones provided for United States soldiers and, as a minimum, they should not be below the standards of United States installations.

All of this, of course, would require funding--funding that would provide a first-class operation comparable to the operation of United States service schools. Additionally, this school should be open to all Latin American nations with whom the United States has diplomatic

relations. The location of the institution would be secondary, but it must remain under United States control.

The only viable alternative would be to close USARSA and possibly increase the spaces for Latin American officers in schools in the Continental United States, especially the Command and General Staff College. On the other hand, since President Carter has stated that the signing of the Panama Canal treaties marks the beginning of a new era in relations between the United States and Latin America, he should perhaps make his statement a reality by revitalizing USARSA and placing the emphasis where it can make a real impact. As long as the military leaders continue to play a vital role in Latin American governments, the United States must maintain access and thus influence.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX: BENITEZ LETTER

[Minor editing without square brackets]

COL. ENRIQUE M. BENITEZ, U.S.A.
1080 N.E. 104th Street
MIAMI SHORES, FLA.

June 13, 1966

Major Robert E. Scofield, Inf.,
Hqrs. USA. School of the Americas,
Fort Gulick, Canal Zone.

Dear Major Scofield:

With reference to your letter, dated April 14, 1966, I would like to make the following comments:

- a. Paragraph 1 of the History of the School, as given in the current School Catalog, contains several erroneous statements which, in my opinion, should be corrected.
- b. The School was founded in 1946 at Fort Amador and was reorganized and transferred to Fort Gulick in 1949.
- c. The statement that prior to 1949 the primary mission of the School was the training of technicians for the U.S. Army is in error; the opposite is true. The Latin American Training Center was founded and functioned for the sole purpose of training Latin American students, not for the training of technicians for the U.S. Army.
- d. The statement that in 1949 the School had 743 U.S. graduates and only 103 Latin Americans is also in error. What happened after my departure in 1949, I am not prepared to comment; but I do know that, prior to 1949, the School had graduated about 250 Latin American personnel. As an example: In 1948, Venezuela alone sent a group of soldiers, about 75 in number, for training, as it will be explained later on.

After the War, I was ordered for duty in the Canal Zone; I was assigned as Commanding Officer of Fort Amador, garrisoned at the time by the 4th Coast Artillery Regiment (AA); one M.P. Company; one Chemical

Company, and small miscellaneous units.

Our Chiefs of Missions in Latin America were handicapped by the lack of trained personnel of Latin American Armies and their lack of familiarity with American equipment, who could assist them in the performance of their training missions. To remedy this situation, the Caribbean Defense Commander, Lieut. General Willis D. Crittenberger, directed that a Latin American Training Center be established at Fort Amador under my direct supervision. Accordingly, School Headquarters were set up and office and dormitory for students were established using barracks formerly occupied by Battery "F" 4th Coast Artillery. Spanish speaking instructors were selected and by early 1946 the School, officially designated as the Latin American Training Center, was functioning. Courses then taught were: signal communications, including the use and repair of radio equipment; engineering, emphasizing bridge construction; motor mechanics; infantry equipment and maintenance; mess sergeants, cooks and bakers. The latter course was established at Fort Clayton, due to lack of facilities at Fort Amador.

Commencement Exercises were held at the Fort Amador Chapel and diplomas and certificates were usually presented by the Caribbean Defense Commander or by his Chief of Staff. The enclosed photograph shows Costa Rican students receiving their diplomas from the Chief of Staff of the Caribbean Command, General Lemuel Mathewson.

The School was a success from the very beginning; but the situation was unsatisfactory due to the fact that it was practically impossible to take care properly of the ever increasing number of students. I submitted a report covering the entire school set-up in the Command and strongly recommended the consolidation of all the Schools--including the leadership--under one Command. It happened that the newly constructed hospital at Fort Gulick was available. Neither this building nor the nurses' quarters had ever been occupied and their facilities, as well as the conveniences available at Fort Gulick, on the shores of Gatun Lake, were ideal for this purpose. My recommendations were approved and all the schools were moved to Fort Gulick without delay.

The first Commencement at Fort Gulick was held in 1949; over 250 students (about 120 U.S. soldiers) received their graduation diplomas, presented by the Caribbean Defense Commander, Major General Ray W. Porter, at which practically all members of the Latin American Diplomatic and Consular Corps were present. It was a memorable occasion as far as the School was concerned. My tour of duty had already been extended once and the second request was disapproved as I was slated for duty with the Interamerican Defense Board in Washington, D. C.

Prior to 1949, the School had graduated students from Peru,

Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Venezuela.

As an illustration of the work of the School, I would like to mention in detail events that happened during an inspection tour by the Caribbean Defense Commander, General Edward H. Brooks. In 1948, General Brooks made an inspection trip to Latin America and I accompanied him as a member of his Staff. In Asuncion, we were greeted at the airport, besides the usual Guard of Honor, by 20 Paraguayan soldiers and noncommissioned officers, graduates of the Latin American Training Center. Returning, via Venezuela, we were informed that the Army Chief of Staff, Colonel Marcos Perez Jimenez (later President of the Republic), desired a conference with General Brooks. The newly constructed buildings for the "Escuela Militar de Venezuela" were ready for occupancy and the School had been provided with the latest equipment modelled after West Point. Colonel Perez Jimenez wanted equipment without delay; General Brooks expressed his willingness to help in every way possible; but he pointed out that the Venezuelan Army lacked the trained personnel to run the various activities of the School, and that we were ready to train the necessary personnel at the Latin American Training Center. Colonel Perez Jimenez agreed with this suggestion and, without delay, he sent about 75 men for training. It had been the rule in the past that the hotels and oil companies immediately, upon graduation, offered good jobs to graduates, particularly the mess sergeants, cooks and bakers. To stop this procedure, the Venezuelan Army issued instructions to the effect that graduates of the Latin American Training Center had to serve at least two years, after graduation, in the Venezuelan Army, before they could be discharged.

It hardly seems necessary to go into more details; it is regrettable that the School Historian (the Adjutant) failed to keep up to date the School records from its very beginning.

About three years ago, an article appeared in the Service Journal in which erroneous statements were made. I wrote a letter to the then School Commandant; but I never received a reply and, judging from the first paragraph on the History of the School, no action was ever taken. It is hoped that you, as Historian, will correct this situation and give a true picture of the development of the School. It would add, in my opinion, to the well deserved prestige that the School now enjoys.

With kindest regards, I am,

Sincerely,

/s/ E. M. Benitez

E.M. BENITEZ,
Colonel USA., Retd.

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